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Message Text

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13
ACTION EB-11

INFO OCT-01 EA-11 ISO-00 CAB-09 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00

DOTE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 FAA-00 SCCT-02 SY-04

TRSE-00 USSS-00 DRC-01 /050 W
---------- 008817
R 140542Z MAY 74
FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 716

C O N F I D E N T I A L HONG KONG 5332

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ETRN HK
SUBJECT: CIVAIR -- AIRPORT SECURITY

REF: HK 4958

SUMMARY: FAA REPRESENTATIVES WHO HAVE OBSERVED AIRPORT OPERATIONS MAY 9-11 SUPPORT CONGEN'S EVALUATION (REFTEL), AND BELIEVE THEIR TIMELY VISIT HAS SERVED TO SPUR REMEDIAL ACTION. CONGEN ACCORDINGLY PLANS TO FOLLOW SITUATION CLOSELY BUT DOES NOT PLAN TO WEIGH IN WITH HKG AT THIS TIME. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING VISIT TO HONG KONG MAY 9-11, FAA REPRESENTATIVES (PACIFIC REGION DIRECTOR JACK WEBB, REGIONAL SECURITY CHIEF BOB GROTH, TOKYO REPRESENTATIVE CECIL ROBBINS) OBSERVED AIRPORT SECURITY OPERATIONS, LUNCHED WITH HKG DIRECTOR OF CIVIL AVIATION (DCA), AND DISCUSSED FINDINGS WITH CONSUL GENERAL. FAA REPS EXPRESSED GENERAL AGREEMENT WITH EVALUATION CONTAINED REFTEL. STERILE AREA CONCEPT OBVIOUSLY REPRESENTS GREAT STEP FORWARD, SCREENING IS DONE WELL, ARMED POLICE AND PLAIN-CLOTHESMEN WELL SITUATED. BUT SYSTEM NEEDS TIGHTENING UP: RAMP ACCESS STILL TOO EASY, POLICE DON'T ALWAYS APPEAR TO BE ALERT, AND X-RAY EQUIPMENT, ALTHOUGH EFFECTIVE AS USED, COULD RUFFLE PASSENGERS (IF FILM EXPOSED) AND BE INJURIOUS TO HEALTH OF OPERATOR (BUT NOT TO PUBLIC). CARGO HANDLING NEEDS BETTER CONTROL.
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2. FAA REPS COMMENTED THAT THEIR VISIT APPARENTLY HAD SPURRED LOCAL OFFICIALS INTO REMEDIAL ACTION. THEY SAID MR. H. M. JOHNSTON, AIRPORT GENERAL MANAGER, WAS NOW WORKING WITH POLICE TO TIGHTEN ACCESS TO RAMPS, AND FAA REPS PREDICTED THAT CURRENT DEFICIENCIES SHOULD BE LARGELY CORRECTED WITHIN TWO MONTHS. THEY ADDED THAT DCA, WHO HAS ATTENDED REGIONAL SECURITY CONFERENCES, IS WELL AWARE OF ASSISTANCE FAA CAN RENDER (E.G. VIA TRAINING COURSES IN THE US) AND THAT HE WOULD PROBABLY ASK FOR ASSISTANCE IF HE CONSIDERED IT NECESSARY.

3. CONGEN PLANS TO DRAW ON ABOVE ASSESSMENT DURING CONTACTS WITH LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES OF U.S. AIRLINES. WE BELIEVE THIS ASSESSMENT INDICATES NEED FOR CONTINUED INTEREST TO ENCOURAGE STEADY IMPROVEMENT, BUT DOES NOT INDICATE NEED TO WEIGH IN WITH HKG AT THIS TIME.
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